

## **Summary of Input and Recommendations of the State Rehabilitation Council; Response of the Designated State Unit; and Explanations for Rejection of Input or Recommendations**

### South Dakota's State Rehabilitation Council (General Agency):

The **State Rehabilitation Council** – is established in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Act) and 34 CFR 361.16-361.17 of its implementing regulations.

South Dakota's State Rehabilitation Council was created in South Dakota codified law, Section 1-36A-5 and termed as the **Board of Vocational Rehabilitation**.

The Board of Vocational Rehabilitation's Annual Report of Activities for State Fiscal Year 2007 reflects the following:

- ✓ The **State Rehabilitation Council** - known in South Dakota as the **Board of Vocational Rehabilitation** – gives advice to and works in partnership with the vocational rehabilitation agency in South Dakota - **Division of Rehabilitation Services**.
- ✓ The **Board of Vocational Rehabilitation** – plays a significant role in ensuring that the vocational rehabilitation program operates effectively.
- ✓ The **Board of Vocational Rehabilitation** works in partnership with the **Division of Rehabilitation Services** in developing policies, planning activities, evaluating program effectiveness and carrying out other functions related to the vocational rehabilitation program.
- ✓ The working relationship between the **Board of Vocational Rehabilitation** and the **Division of Rehabilitation Services** is a true partnership focused on ensuring that individuals with disabilities receive appropriate, timely, and effective vocational rehabilitation services.

In accordance with the Rehabilitation Act and the State's open meeting laws, SDCL 1-25-1, the Board holds quarterly meetings at a minimum. These meetings are open to the public and held in various locations statewide. Meetings held during the report period included:

June 7-8, 2007 in Sioux Falls  
September 13-14, 2007 in Pierre  
November 26-27, 2007 in Rapid City  
March 10-11, 2008 in Pierre

### Summary of Input and Recommendations:

- Staff support agreement for the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Statewide Independent Living Council was re-negotiated. The Chairperson of both the Board and Council submitted a letter to the provider, which indicated they were pleased with the provision of staff support.

*Division's Response: The Division supports this recommendation and a new contract was implemented.*

- The Board scheduled their June meeting to coincide with the Youth Leadership Forum. Members were interested in hearing the conversation between the youth and the legislative panel members and other local and state leaders. The luncheon following the panel presentation also provided an opportunity for members to visit with the youth, panel members and other invited guests.

*Division's Response: The Division supports this recommendation and provided support as needed.*

- Board members participated in the vocational rehabilitation services stakeholder's meetings held by Rehabilitation Services Administration staff. Members provided input regarding the vocational rehabilitation services delivery system to include promising practices, areas for improvement and any need for technical assistance.

*Division's Response: The Division supports this recommendation and provided support as needed.*

- Several Board members attended the Road to Freedom Tour event in Sioux Falls. Disability advocates, people with disabilities, family members, local/state leaders came together for the day's events, to include networking and touring the traveling exhibit featuring the disability rights movement, demonstrations of recreational activities, and hearing presentations about building cross disability coalition efforts to defend and strengthen disability rights.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and provided support as needed.*

- The Board agreed to coordinate its solicitation process for nominations with that of the Statewide Independent Living Council. Nominees were submitted to the Governor's Office for his review and action along with the names of members who were interested in serving a second term. Appointments were made and as a result the Board met the composition requirements as required by the Rehabilitation Act.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and assisted in solicitation nominations.*

- As a result of Board and Division discussions involving the Order of Selection, the Division incorporated an "Order of Selection Survey Form". This survey collected data to ensure appropriate services were being provided or referrals were being made.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and implemented the survey. The results of the survey were shared with the board at later meetings.*

- The Board approved a request from the Sioux Falls Americans with Disabilities Act Committee to cover some of the costs associated with hosting an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Anniversary Celebration held in Sioux Falls.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and provided support as needed.*

- The Board and Division undertook a major task of examining the provision of vocational rehabilitation services. Members of the

Consumer Services Committee met a number of times throughout the year to review information (i.e., public meeting comments, consumer satisfaction survey results, Freedom to Work survey results, Department of Transportation fiscal year end data, input gathered at conferences, case file reviews). The process entailed identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the agency and outlining new goals, strategies, and action steps. This information became the foundation for working on the State Plan document and related attachments. The process of preparing the State Plan and related documents was shared with the Board, Division field offices' staff and general public for additional input and comment.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports the committee's involvement and incorporated all their recommendations..*

- A Board meeting was planned to coincide with PLANS (Persons Leading Accessible Networks of Supports). This was an informational exchange of providing background information of whom and what each other does. Questions were utilized to enhance dialogue (i.e., What are you hearing from people about their experiences with vocational rehabilitation services; Are there missing pieces that if filled would help those presently falling through the cracks?). The environment was informal resulting in open dialogue at each table and comments were collected.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and provided support as needed.*

- A request was made to have a presentation from the Business Leadership Network staff regarding what services and activities are offered to area employers. Information was shared on the Symon Awards luncheon, training for human resource managers, employer training, Greenstar Symposium, Mentoring Day, Disability Expo, and the leadership round tables involving employers.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and assisted in arranging in the presentation.*

- The Board approved the Executive Committee's recommendation for the FY 2008 resource plan. Monies were obligated to support

National Disability Employment Awareness Month activities, Governor's Awards Luncheon, public forums, and individual/organizational funding requests for training.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports the recommendations and assisted in funding NDEAM events and actively participated at the local levels to assure success of the events.*

- Several Board members participated in the Division's Fall Conference which focused on attitude change and motivation, hiring and retaining employees in a world of competition and change, leadership in times of constant change and crisis, ethical considerations, strategies to decelerate violent encounters, identifying functional limitations, and serving returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan. Conference attendees included staff from the vocational rehabilitation service delivery arena, employers, and human resource managers.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this activity.*

- Board Member Orientation was held for new members. Topics included: History of Rehabilitation, principles and policies, Rehabilitation Act, State Rehabilitation Council Role, organizational overview of the Department of Human Services, State Plan document, public meetings, statewide needs assessment, benefit specialists, and other activities of the Board and Division.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and assisted in arranging in the presentation.*

- The Board requested a presentation on the Office of Special Education's special education indicators' study. Information obtained included percent of youth on an IEP who are employed and who are enrolled in post secondary education. The survey reported the percentage of youth competitively employed, how many hours worked per week, type of employment setting, percentage of those covered by family insurance, and number of them who have had contact with a vocational rehabilitation counselor.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and assisted in arranging in the presentation.*

- Recommendation to have the following items on the Board's meeting agendas: Statewide Needs Assessment, Year End Results Performance Indicators, Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities, RSA Annual Review Report and Monitoring Review, and Activities of Daily Living Services Survey Results. The Board also requested periodic updates on the Statewide Independent Living Council, Workforce Development Council, Freedom to Work, Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Program, Department of Labor 'Navigator' positions, and Youth Leadership Forum.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and assisted in arranging in the presentations.*

- A request was made following the Freedom to Work Project Update to have periodic updates on the Employer Resource Network and Career Development Team. This involves relationship building and problem solving with employers, human resource managers, private providers, vocational rehabilitation staff and consumers who are interested in employment.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and assisted in arranging in the updates.*

- At the Board's November meeting the Final Report from Rehabilitation Services Administration was added in addition to the Year End Results data. Discussion continued on the goals of how to address the challenge of increasing wages for individuals with disabilities and identifying employment opportunities in higher paying occupations in our rural state. As a result of the discussion, the recommendation was made to have a representative from the Department of Labor come and provide an overview of the technical programs and alternative schools, and provide an update on the Job Corps program.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and assisted in arranging in the presentation.*

- Members participated in the MidWinter conference which focused on succeeding against the odds, overcoming adversity, developing your talents and ethical dilemmas of consumer choice. Other breakout

sessions included: work incentives, self-employment, culture of poverty, working with transition age students and planning for success.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports the board's involvement in attending this event.*

- The Board and Division sent representatives to Partners in Policymaking graduation session in April to their scheduled "listening session". This was a facilitated discussion on topics, which impact people living with a disability (i.e., vocational rehabilitation, independent living, transportation, housing, social security, and education).

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and assisted in attending the listening session.*

- Funds were awarded to eleven communities, which responded to the Board's Request for Funding Notice to host events, which support National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Sponsored activities will include disability etiquette training, employer training, chamber mixers, and other disability awareness activities.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and assisted in the activities.*

- Division staff shared information regarding the Consumer Satisfaction Survey with the Consumer Services Committee. Information obtained from this survey has been utilized in the planning and development of specific state plan attachments. Annually, the committee reviews the survey instrument to ensure appropriateness and timeliness of the questions asked.

*Division's Response:* *The Division continues to conduct the consumer satisfaction survey and share the results with the Board.*

- The Board reviewed information submitted by the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Council (NCSRS). The NCSRS was seeking the Board's support of a resolution. The Board responded that it supported the NCSRS's concept but did not have enough information to endorse the resolution.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and actions.*

- Throughout the year the Consumer Services Committee is asked to review and provide comment on draft policies and program guides. The committee reviewed the Residency Requirement for VR Applicants and Individuals being Served by Multiple State Public VR Agencies. The full Board also had the opportunity to submit further comment on the program guide, in addition to it being made available on the Division's website for further comment.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports the involvement of the VR Board in reviewing draft policies.*

- The Public Awareness Committee's funding recommendations for hosting the 2008 National Disability Employment Awareness Month activities were approved by the full board. The Division agreed to provide financial assistance, if it was needed.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and provided financial assistance as needed.*

- The '2009 State Plan Submission Process' has been on various agendas throughout this reporting period. The Consumer Services Committee was assigned the task of reviewing draft attachments and providing recommendations to the full Board. During the March meeting, the Consumer Services Committee agreed to review all related information and provide their recommendations to the Executive Committee for further action prior to the Division presenting the information to the State Workforce Development Council.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports the involvement of the consumer services committee and incorporated their recommendations..*

- The Board agreed to host their June 2008 meeting in conjunction with the Youth Leadership Forum to provide new members the opportunity to attend and seasoned members to return. The November 2008 meeting will be planned to coincide with the South Dakota Association of Community Based Services. This will allow members to meet and visit with the directors and staff of adjustments training



centers and obtain more feedback on the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and encouraged the Board to participate in the YLF luncheon.*

- The Board amended language regarding the description of officers within their bylaws during the June 2008 meeting. They also agreed to review the remainder of the bylaws for other possible changes at a future meeting.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and actions.*

- The Board and Division sent representatives to the State Rehabilitation Council training session held June 25-27 in St. Louis, Missouri for Regions 5, 6, 7, and 8.

*Division's Response:* *The Division supports this recommendation and actions.*